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14 August 2007

Lyndon Rowe  
Chairman  
Economic Regulation Authority  
PO Box 8469  
PERTH BUSINESS CENTRE WA 6849

Dear Sir,

**Re. Western Power 330 Kva power line Eneabba to Moonyoonooka.**

I refer you to the proposed new 330 kva high tension power line to be built by Western Power from Eneabba to Moonyoonooka.

Western Power has identified a preferred route for this power line. This route traverses through many farming properties east of the Brand Highway.

Many farmers on whose property transmission towers will be erected are incensed by the policies and actions of the state government enacted by Western Power.

I have personally attended two community/stakeholder group meetings conducted by W.P.C. I have also had a meeting with a group of forty farmers expressing their anger and frustration towards W.P.C. and the state government for having a predetermined preference/policy to use private farm land to construct the power line on, as against using vacant crown land where possible when it is available.

The landowners affected by this proposed power line acknowledge the need for new infrastructure and accept that there will be circumstances when private farmland will need to be affected in some instances. Their reasonable position is that farmland use should be minimised.

What they find, (and I agree with them) totally unacceptable is that government policy that applies to construction of WPC high tension transmission lines is that despite whatever additional cost (\$25million in this case) is incurred by way of a longer route over farm land, preference is to use that private land against using crown land, as is the case in this example

Legislation provides that a once off compensation is paid for any loss during construction and a once off compensation payment is made to the landowner for the value of the land that the towers stand on.

With no avenue of charging annual lease fees to W.P.C., landowners are deprived of sharing in the profits that flow to W.P.C. and the taxpayer from the companies that generate the power, which flows through the power line owned by W.P.C on behalf of the taxpayer.

In essence, the power generating companies make profits, W.P.C. makes a profit, the state receives a dividend from W.P.C. but the farmer whose land the towers and the power line stands receives no share in those profits. The landowner simply, continues for the life of the infrastructure to put up with the bio-security risks to his agricultural operations, inconvenience and added cost to his business, loss of property value and loss of amenity, to provide private corporations and the government with annual income and other benefits.

In summary, my request to the ERA is to inquire into the following;

- 1). How can the state government justify spending an additional \$25 million (the figure given to me by W.P.C.) of taxpayers money, on the construction of the Eneabba to Moonyoonooka power line by choosing a route that is approximately 25 kilometres longer via farmland?
- 2). Why should the state government have a policy (DEC) that directs W.P.C. to not use vacant crown land when available, with a preference of using farmland when available to construct high tension transmission lines on, thus leading to additional taxpayer expense - this case in example.
- 3). On the basis of precedent that Telstra pay farmers an annual lease payment for its towers and infrastructure on private land. What justification is there, in not having provisions in our statutes that allows annual compensation payments or lease payments to be made by W.P.C. to landowners on whose property electricity towers stand?
- 4). On the basis of precedent that wind farm electricity generators pay farmers/landowners annual rental payments for land that the turbine towers stand on. What justification does W.P.C., which is a profit making entity, have in not having the capacity (protected by legislation) in paying annual rental payments to the landowners on whose property their electricity towers stand?
- 5). Should it not be in the best interests of the taxpayer that state government infrastructure, such as high tension power lines, should be built as cost effectively and efficiently as far as practical, utilising crown land where possible, there by minimising the loss of property rights and inconvenience to landowners.

I make this submission to your authority on behalf of the affected landowners, who I believe are on the receiving end of out dated legislation that does not afford them fair and just compensation.

Since the days of government owned utilities that simply provided a service that originally were not profit driven, that have now been "government corporatised" eg W.P.C. and are now profit driven, we now witness taxpayers funding additional costs for infrastructure on the basis of unsubstantiated and unnecessary environmental driven policy.

I look forward to your response.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

**GARY SNOOK, M.L.A.**  
MEMBER FOR MOORE  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE;  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT; PROPERTY RIGHTS;  
AND THE WHEATBELT